



On the Bayou

JUNE 2020



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Message from the Director

Dr. Deepak Bhatnagar

I hope all of you and your families are safe and no news about ill health is good news to me.

ARS, under USDA guidelines, is preparing to allow staff to return to work in phases. The primary considerations are safety conditions and the local community environment.

Details for our return to work are available in the “Reopening USDA Playbook” on the Axon website. Supplemental ARS-specific guidance is also included and outlines our phased return to normal operations. For more information, go to:

<https://axon.ars.usda.gov/Employee%20Tools/Pages/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Information.aspx>

SRRC safety staff is busy preparing standard operating procedures for our safe return to work. No date has been set, however we are close to starting Phase 1.

When we return to the Center, it will be every individual’s responsibility to take precautionary steps to keep themselves and others safe. Individuals will have to take responsibility to social distance and wear protective covering for the safety our SRRC family. Our shared goal is for all of us to stay healthy as we continue to do our work.

More details are forthcoming. In the meantime, stay safe and busy.

2020 Asian Pacific American Heritage Celebration

Submitted by: H.N. Cheng

On May 20 Cynthia Lee Sheng, President of Jefferson Parish, spoke to SRRC personnel in a Zoom meeting to celebrate 2020 Asian Pacific American Heritage (APAH) month - virtually.

Cynthia won the Jefferson Parish presidential election in October 2019, avoiding a run-off by garnering 57 percent of the votes in a landslide victory. In January 2020, Cynthia made history and became the first female and the first Asian American to ascend to the presidency in Jefferson Parish.

Cynthia gave a good summary of her efforts as Parish President during the first five months of her tenure; the biggest challenge being the Covid-19 pandemic. She saw the problem coming and declared a state of emergency on March 12. Since then, she has worked tirelessly to coordinate and facilitate the activities to contain the coronavirus while providing timely and helpful service to parish residents. She asked all people entering parish buildings to have their temperature checked and wear face masks while in public common areas. The Jefferson Parish, partners with LCMC and Ochsner Health, is now conducting free COVID-19 mobile testing at the Clearview Center in Metairie. Since May 15, Jefferson Parish has moved to Phase One, allowing some businesses to open under strict occupancy, protection and social distancing guidelines.

After her talk, she answered numerous questions from the audience. The topics were very broad, including Covid-19 issues, future of the Parish, economic growth, recycling, and her favorite place in the Parish. She was gracious and answered the questions attentively and positively. She also provided thoughtful comments and advice about women in politics and racial prejudice.

The event was well attended with 71 SRRC staff participating via Zoom.



Recognition

Research Plant Physiologist **Heping Cao** published a major research paper as one of the corresponding authors in the high-impact journal *Genomics, Proteomics & Bioinformatics* (CiteScore: 6.82, Impact Factor: 6.597).

The paper entitled, “Tung Tree (*Vernicia fordii*) Genome Provides A Resource for Understanding Genome Evolution and Improved Oil Production” was selected by the journal as its featured story for its December 2019 issue.

This study was accomplished by multi-national collaboration including the Central South University of Forestry and Technology, US Department of Agriculture, University of Toronto, and Nextomics. Tung tree (*Vernicia fordii*) is an economically important woody oil plant that produces tung oil composed of approximately 80% α -eleostearic acid, an unusual fatty acid. Tung oil has been used as a drying ingredient in paints, varnishes, and coatings for more than 2000 years. The authors reported a chromosome-scale assembly of tung tree genome and an electronic fluorescent pictographic browser for tung tree. Based on the genomics and transcriptomics data, the authors discovered a repeat-driven genome expansion mechanism, identified 17 NBS-coding genes which may be involved in early-infection stage of *Fusarium* wilt resistance, and elucidated a network of 88 genes involved in tung oil biosynthesis pathway. This study should provide valuable resources for functional genomics research and essential tools for breeding elite cultivars of tung tree.

To read the open access article, go to:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S167202291830216X?via%3Dihub>



Gardening Class

A free online home gardening class for new and experienced gardeners is being offered by the LSU AgCenter Horticulture Agents. One of the silver linings of the quarantine is that many people are planting gardens for the first time or are now able to expand and develop existing gardens. Similar to the WWII Victory Gardening movement, gardening is a great activity for the whole family and a way to produce food at home. You can complete this course weekly on your own schedule and there is not cost!

Class starts on **June 5**, so register in time. For more information and to register, go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/home-gardening-certificate-course-tickets-105988584710>

Facility Safety Upgrades

Submitted by: Matt King

In preparation for returning to work, Front Desk and Storeroom Screens have recently been installed. Similar screens have been added to the desks of the Administrative staff.

These personal distance and protection screens, at the Front Desk and Storeroom, are for both user and worker protections during the current Corona Virus pandemic. These screens serve as protections for individuals on either side and are there for safe use of the facility during daily traffic of people in and out of these areas.



Storeroom

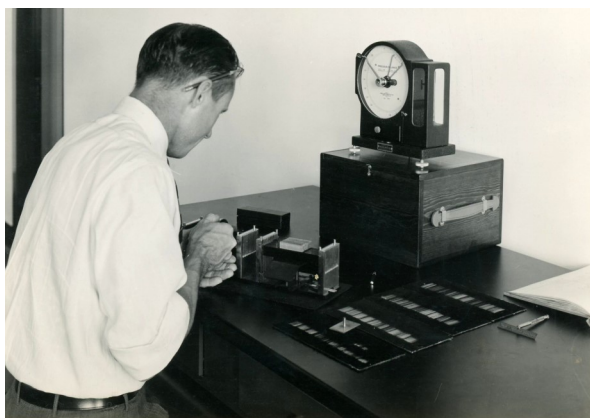


Front Desk

A Step Back in Time at SRRC

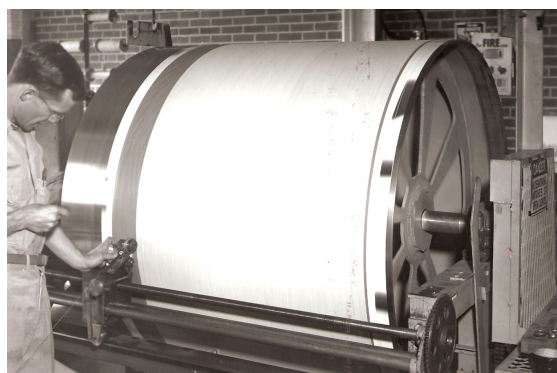
Submitted by: Christine Sickler

In our efforts to document the history of SRRC, the Vintage Lab records the history and displays some of the equipment used in past research efforts. Here are two examples used in cotton research:



October 10, 1941: Cotton fiber length sorter. W. Sharrott Smith, Cotton Fiber Research Division, SRRL

February 4, 1947: Tire cord being wound on drum of tire ply-building machine. Cotton Processing Research Division, SRRL



Summer Camp and Activities

Submitted by Terri von Hoven

Since summer camp opportunities are limited due to current events, we felt it important to share what is available for our staff to consider:

Beginning June 15, Vamonos Nola will be hosting its Spanish immersion camp.

<http://vamonosnola.com/>

Tulane University is offering an on-line version of its STEM summer camps for middle and high school ages. <https://tulane.app.box.com/s/u1wzbnmnh9zngsfe2lwbi5cd7ihrek3f>

KidCam is offering summer camp at City Park. <http://kidcamcamp.com/camp-locations/city-park/>

JunctionPlace Sportsplex is offering sports summer camps.

<https://www.junctionplacesportsplex.com/summer-all-sports-camp/>

Summer Virtual Programs:

Join the National WWII Museum in an educational journey from the US, to Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Pacific!

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/programs/summer-virtual-programs>

At Virtual Art Camp, kids learn through **LIVE INTERACTION** with each other and their teacher on the video platform Zoom. Theater, Drawing, Dance Classes are open to kids ANYWHERE!

<https://www.artcamp504.org/>

2020 LOUIS "SATCHMO" ARMSTRONG SUMMER JAZZ CAMP: Virtual Jazz Camp

<https://louisarmstrongjazzcamp.com/>

NOMA is excited to announce the *Hot Art, Cool Kids: Summer Art Kit*, featuring live virtual sessions and at-home art-making activities inspired by works in the museum and sculpture garden.

<https://noma.org/summer-art-kit/>

Louisiana Children's Museum offers Connections At Home, a variety of ways to play no matter where you are: <https://www.lcm.org/connections-at-home/>

Ogden Museum of Southern Art offers Ogden Kids Art Break videos.

<https://ogdenmuseum.org/ogdenmuseumonline/>

The New Orleans Public Library offers Virtual Storytime

<http://nolalibrary.org/page/36/for-children>

Alex Beard reads his children's books and demonstrates hand and foot art.

<https://www.talesfromthewateringhole.com/> and click on "Read and Learn" when you hover over each book cover

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2rwI_PUbVQMF101ui9JOYw?view_as=subscriber

Artwork making video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mV9x3X4jVBg>

Recent SRRC Publications

Submitted by: Suhad Wojkowski

Full text pdfs of SRRC publications are available in the Eprints database via “Library” link on the SRRC Intranet page: <http://nola.srrc.usda.gov:8000/srrcmenf.htm>

Click on the article's title below to launch the pdf from Eprints.

Boone, Stephanie and Ihli, S. and Hartsough, D. and Hernandez, Luis and Sanders, J. and Klasson, K. Thomas and Lima, Isabel M. (2020) [*Application of Permanganate to Reduce Microbial Contamination and Sugar Loss in Raw-Sugar Production in Louisiana, USA.*](#) International Sugar Journal, 122 (1456). pp. 254-260.

Cao, Heping and Sethumadhavan, Kandan (2020) [*Cottonseed Bioactive Compounds and Peptides.*](#) In: 2020 Beltwide Cotton Conferences, January 8-10, 2020, Austin, TX.

Chen, Ni and Qin, Fan and Zhai, Xanxin and Cao, Heping and Zhang, Rui and Cao, Fangping (2020) [*Evaluation of Coordinated Development of Forestry Management Efficiency and Forest Ecological Security: A Spatiotemporal Empirical Study Based on China's Provinces.*](#) Journal of Cleaner Production, 260 (121042). pp. 1-15.

He, Zhongqi and Zhang, Dunhua and Olanya, O.Modesto (2020) [*Antioxidant Activities of The Water-Soluble Fractions Of Glandless and Glanded Cottonseed Protein.*](#) Food Chemistry, 325 (126907). pp. 1-8.

Zhang, Lin and Liu, Meilan and Long, Hongxu and Dong, Wei and Pasha, Asher and Esteban, Eddi and Li, Wenying and Yang, Xiaoming and Li, Ze and Song, Aixia and Ran, Duo and Zhao, Guang and Zeng, Yanling and Chen, Hao and Zou, Ming and Li, Jingjing and Liang, Fan and Xie, Meili and Hu, Jiang and Wang, Depeng and Cao, Heping and Provart, Nicholas J. and Zhang, Liangsheng and Tan, Xiaofeng (2019) [*Tung Tree \(Vernicia fordii\) Genome Provides A Resource for Understanding Genome Evolution and Improved Oil Production.*](#) Genomics Proteomics Bioinformatics, 17. pp. 558-575.